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The President's Daily Brief

February 7, 1976

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Table of Contents

25X1

Lebanon:

25X1

(Page 1)

25X1

China: The party's left wing appears to be making
a determined effort to forestall the formal
designation of Teng Hsiao-ping as premier.
(Page 3)

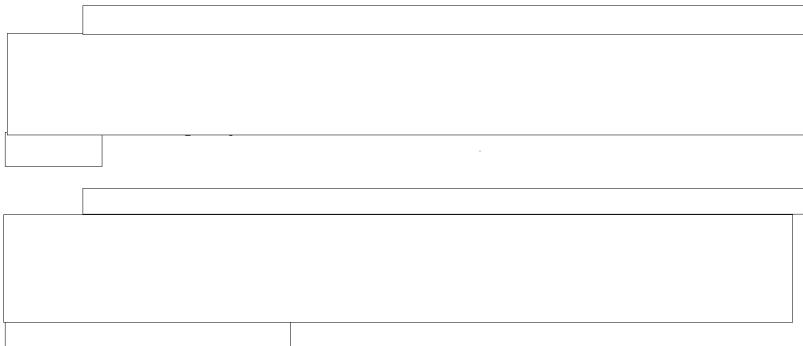
Notes: Jordan-USSR; Portugal; Italy (Pages 5 and 6)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LEBANON



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25X1

25X1

CHINA

The left wing of the Chinese Communist Party appears to be making a determined effort to forestall the formal designation of Teng Hsiao-ping as premier. According to a Western press report, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said today that Public Security Minister Hua Kuo-feng has been appointed "acting premier."

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Hua's appointment leaves unclear the status of Teng, who is first vice premier and who has been filling in for Chou En-lai for over a year. [redacted]

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Hua is the sixth ranking vice premier and the politburo member in charge of agriculture. He is not considered a member of the party's left wing.

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The leftist attack is also aimed at discrediting officials who will play an important role in the post-Chou En-lai succession process, especially those who were rehabilitated in the last few years. The vehicle of the leftist offensive is a debate over educational policy and personal attacks on the minister of education.

An article in People's Daily on February 6 criticizes those who want to raise educational standards in the universities--a veiled reference to the education minister, himself a rehabilitated official--but concentrates its fire on the "capitalist roaders inside the party" who were "exposed" during the Cultural Revolution but have failed to change their views.

The frequent references to "capitalist roaders" in the party have particular significance for Teng Hsiao-ping, who was branded during the Cultural Revolution as "the number-two man in the party taking the capitalist road." The article acknowledges that such people are currently "in power" and are

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trying to reverse the policies of the Cultural Revolution. An earlier article attacked unnamed officials overthrown during the Cultural Revolution but who now are back in power. The party's left wing opposed Teng's rehabilitation in 1973 and has taken occasional propaganda slaps at him ever since.

Since Chou En-lai's death on January 8, there have been signs that leadership meetings have been held in Peking, presumably to fill party positions left vacant by the deaths of top party officials. Although it is not certain whether the meetings are still in progress or whether any firm decisions have yet been reached, there has been no official announcement of a new premier, and Teng has not appeared in public since Chou's funeral on January 15.

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Italy's Christian Democrats are insisting that Aldo Moro line up more solid parliamentary backing for his proposed economic program before forming a one-party caretaker cabinet.

The Christian Democrats had earlier offered to form a cabinet on their own only if Moro could persuade the other three center-left parties to vote in favor of a package of emergency economic measures. The Social Democrats agreed, but the Socialists and Republicans offered only to abstain. Conservatives in the Christian Democratic Party feared that forming a government under these circumstances would leave the party exposed to criticism if the government program failed to improve the economic situation. They have asked Moro to try again to persuade at least the Republicans to support the economic package. If Moro succeeds, the Christian Democrats are apparently still willing to form a government.

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